

Wagner – Peyser Agricultural Outreach Plan

1. Assessment of Need

Value of Agricultural Production

In 2011 agriculture generated \$3.5 billion in income on 29,300 farms and ranches in Montana, making it Montana's largest industry. A comparison of selected Montana industries shows agriculture continues to outpace all other industry sectors. The 2011 value of crop production increased to \$2.1 billion, an increase of \$342.8 million or 19% above 2010. The value of livestock increased in 2011 to \$1.4 billion, up \$156.5 million from 2010. When comparing major industrial sectors in Montana, receipts were mostly higher than in 2010 with agriculture showing a 14% increase, up \$470.8 million. Montana's value of crop production increased by 49.8% or \$1.06 billion from 2006 to 2011 and the value of livestock production increased by 8.5% or \$2.1 million during 2006 to 2011.

In 2011 crop production accounted for nearly two-thirds (59.9%) of total agricultural production in Montana. By commodity group, food grains were valued at \$1.3 billion in 2011 which is 70% of the total value of the states crop production. Feed crops were valued at \$440.9 million in Montana comprising nearly a quarter (22.6%) of the crop production in 2011. Oil crops, fruits and tree nuts, vegetables and other crops made up another \$751.6 million in crop value for 2011.

The value of livestock production in Montana accounted for over a third (40.1%) of total agricultural production for 2011. Meat Animals were valued at \$1.2 billion which accounts for 85% of the total value of the state's livestock production. Poultry and eggs, dairy products, wool, honey and miscellaneous livestock make up 8.9% or \$1.4 million of value in livestock production for 2011.

Table 1

Value Added to the US Economy by the Agricultural Sector, Montana

Item	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	Million Dollars					
Value of Crop Production	903.6	1,302.3	1,732.2	1,720.9	1,907.3	1,949.1
Food Grains	698.3	889.9	1,191.3	1,002.0	1,036.5	1,372.0
Feed Crops	180.0	227.3	313.2	421.4	415.9	440.9
Oil crops	9.7	10.6	12.8	12.6	16.2	17.8
Fruits and tree nuts	1.7	7.1	7.9	5.5	7.9	7.9
Vegetables	60.3	105.3	104.6	109.4	163.1	157.5
All other crops	106.5	97.6	92.1	111.0	139.7	126.0
Home consumption	1.9	1.7	2.0	1.2	1.1	1.5
Value of Livestock Production	1,215.6	1,349.2	1,183.8	1,026.2	1,219.9	1,425.5
Meat animals	1,106.4	1,019.7	1,062.8	968.9	1,152.1	1,266.5
Dairy products	45.6	61.1	58.0	42.8	48.0	56.3
Poultry and eggs	4.8	10.1	11.7	8.7	8.5	9.6
Miscellaneous livestock	52.8	43.5	47.1	48.4	54.9	87.6
Home consumption	6.1	5.2	6.3	5.8	6.8	6.5

SOURCE: Economic Indicators of the Farm Sector, State Income and Balance Sheet Statistics, USDA-ERS

On an individual commodity basis, wheat was Montana's most valuable commodity in 2011 with cash receipts totaling \$1.37 billion. Cattle and calves were the second most valuable commodity totaling \$1.2 billion in cash receipts. A distant third for 2011 cash receipts is hay at \$2.7 million in Montana. All eight of the major livestock products in Montana for 2011 increased in value from the prior year except the commodity of sheep and lambs which had no notable cash receipts reported for the year. Of the 12 major crops eight commodities had an increase in value from 2010. Wheat and livestock account for approximately three-fourths of the state's agricultural receipts according to data from the Montana field office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service. Montana is currently leading the nation in production for dry edible peas and lentils. Montana is ranked second in the nation for average farm size, barley, spring wheat, Austrian winter peas and flaxseed production. Finally, Montana is ranked third in the nation for winter and durum wheat, alfalfa hay, safflower and canola production.

A combination of early flooding and drought later in the 2011 growing season hampered what had promised to be an excellent year for the Montana farmers and ranchers. Montana surpassed North Dakota as the leading lentil and pea producer in 2011. Montana's reputation in pulse crops and grain attracted several new buyers to establish new businesses in our state. The competition is good when it comes to markets for Montana's high quality staples such as wheat, barley and hay and livestock. Markets for some products within the state increased with little attention. During the past two years Montana livestock producers have sold more than \$20 million in live cattle, embryos and semen to the expanding and flourishing market in Russia alone.

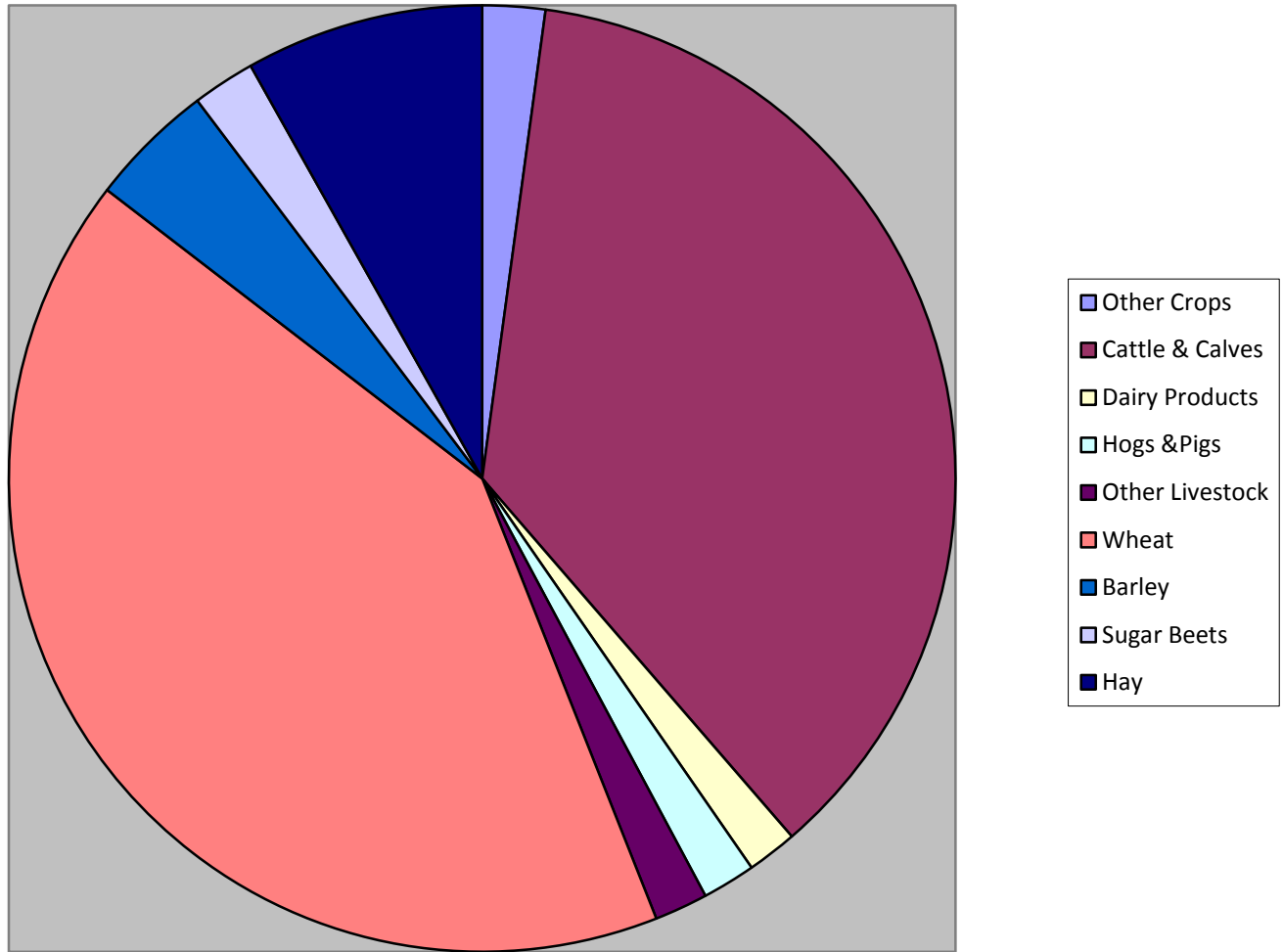
Table 2

Cash Receipts by Commodities

Item	2010 cash receipts	2011 cash receipts
Livestock and Products		
Cattle and calves	1,084,644	1,207,605
Dairy products	47,996	56,317
Sheep and lambs	20,700	-----
Wool	3,200	4,440
Hogs and pigs	46,771	58,889
Chicken eggs	6,619	7,569
Honey	18,356	21,878
All other livestock/1	31,453	59,020
Crops		
Wheat	1,036,524	1,372,012
Barley	167,394	143,093
Sugar beets	80,256	71,168
Hay	230,219	270,704
Potatoes, fall	33,248	38,494
Oil crops	16,200	17,814
Oats	2,691	2,891
Dry Peas	37,798	39,299
Lentils	80,280	67,653
Corn	15,557	24,215
Cherries, Sweet	4,026	4,068
All other Crops/2	75,048	71,909
1/All other livestock includes horses/mules, poultry and products including chickens, turkeys & turkey eggs, bees, beeswax, rabbits and mink. 2/ All other field crops include fruits, vegetables, seeds, and greenhouse and nursery products.		

SOURCE: 2012 Department of Agriculture Statistics

Cash Receipts - 2011



Crops
\$2,122,127
59.9%

Livestock Products
\$1,420,079
40.1%

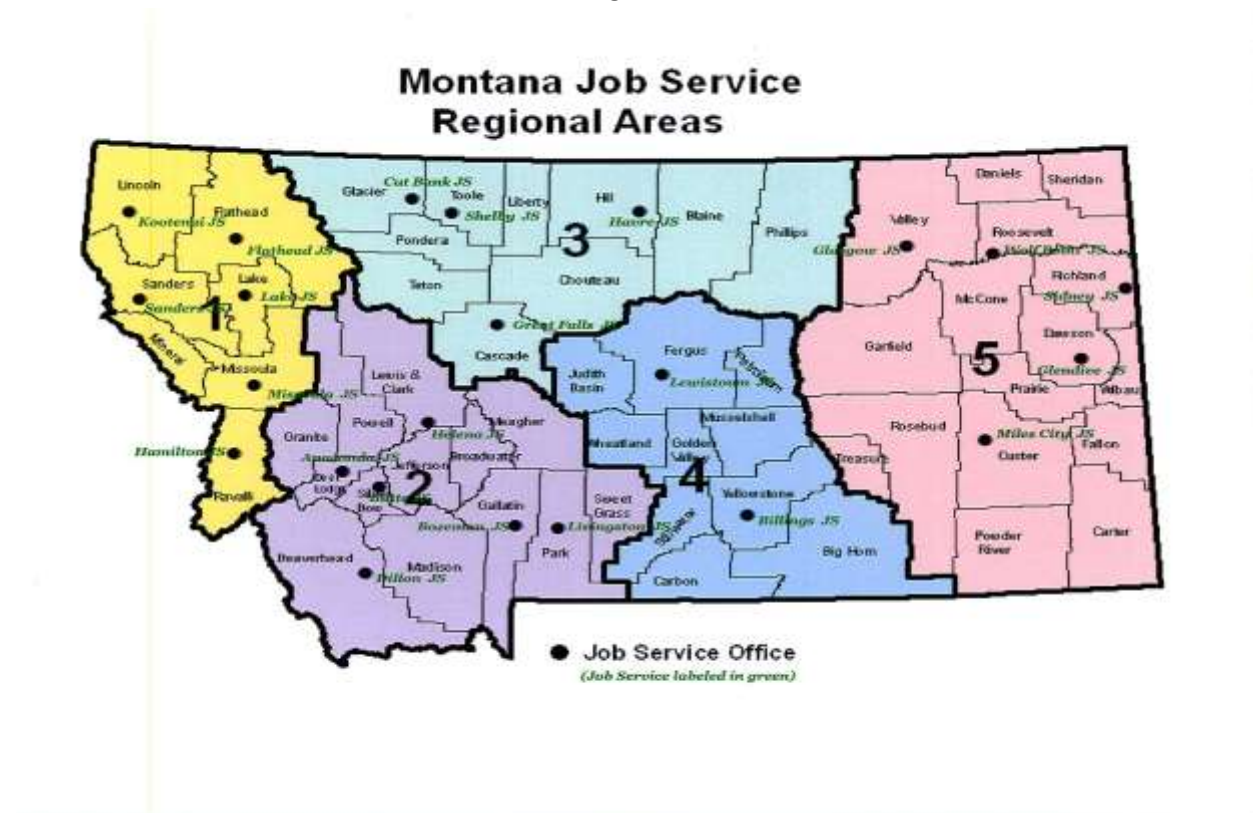
Agricultural Employment in Montana

The employment rates in agriculture are very difficult to predict due to consistent unknown factors inherent to crop production and at times livestock production. Crop production in Montana is affected by our short growing season. It is not uncommon for planting to occur later than desired and harvest to take place earlier than desired due to snow fall. Most crops must be planted during certain times of the year, weeded, fertilized and then harvested as they mature or ripen. Montana growers have employed a substantial number of seasonal farm workers who sometimes will move from farm to farm but most

often workers will stay on with one employer for the entire season. Montana based seasonal farm workers typically are employed for up to nine months of the year and often work in more than one type of production (both livestock and crops). The official estimates of agricultural employment are derived from surveys of agricultural establishments that participate in the unemployment insurance system, and from the previous year's state income tax reporting for agricultural establishments. As a result they are more likely to count permanent agricultural workers than migrant and seasonal farm workers.

The 2007 Census of Agriculture shows that 22,377 individuals worked for 6,492 farm and/or ranch employers in Montana. Since 2007 Montana farm payrolls have been steady with slight decreases. According to the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, agriculture employment accounts for approximately 1% of the total work force. Montana Department of Labor and Industry has established five workforce regions. These regions are displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1



The agricultural jobs in Montana are not necessarily concentrated in regional pockets but are spread throughout the state. Although there is not a single region with a concentration of agricultural employment, one county, Beaverhead, in region 2 has a higher number of employers utilizing farm workers.

Table 3 shows the mean and median wages of agricultural occupations in Montana in 2010. This information was obtained from the Montana State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates done in May of 2010.

Table 3

Agricultural Wages by Occupation in Montana

Occupational Title	May 2011 Employment Estimates	Mean Hourly Wage	Mean Annual Wage	Percentile (Median) Hourly Wage	Percentile (Median) Annual Wage
Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations	1,420	\$15.84	\$32,950	\$14.82	\$30,830
First-line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers	130	\$21.57	\$44,870	\$18.52	\$38,520
Agricultural Inspectors	80	\$16.57	\$34,460	\$13.07	\$27,190
Farm Workers and laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	210	\$11.93	\$24,820	\$11.37	\$23,660
Farm Workers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	340	\$11.99	\$24,940	\$10.69	\$22,230
Agricultural Workers, All Other	80	\$16.11	\$33,520	\$16.42	\$34,160

SOURCE: Montana Department of Labor, Our Facts Your Future

In the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey conducted in Montana several farm labor categories were not surveyed; in particular the Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Manager, Animal Breeder and the Agricultural Equipment Operators categories were not addressed. The three categories listed are historically the highest paid professions. From the information collected in the Montana 2011 OES survey the First-line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers category was the highest paid, earning \$44,870 annually on average. The next highest paid categories were Agricultural Inspectors (\$34,460); Agricultural Workers, All Other (\$33,520), and Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations (\$32,950).

The majority of Montana farm workers earn extremely low wages. The average annual income for the Montana National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) participant is less than \$6,200 annually. Many basic family needs such as nutrition, housing, healthcare, childcare and transportation are out of reach for farm worker families. 96% of NFJP participants are long-time agriculture workers with little other work experience or skills.

Montana has two particularly labor intensive crops; sweet cherries and huckleberries. The harvesting of these is exclusively done by hand picking. Both of these commodities are only produced during the summer season in Montana in Workforce Region 1. The Montana cherries growers produce primarily for the fresh market.

Number of Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers in Montana

Estimates of agricultural employment in this report are derived from agricultural labor data that the Montana NFJP (Rural Employment Opportunities, REO) compiled from surveys of farm owner-operators in Montana. Agricultural employers who participated in the survey report the number of jobs filled by all workers in their establishments during the survey's reference week. However, given the crop cycle, demand for farm workers tends to be highly seasonal, with peak periods of demand often lasting for a short duration. As a result, high job turnover and worker mobility are distinguishing features of the agricultural labor market. Survey-based official employment estimates count permanent farm jobs and any jobs filled by migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFWs) identified by employers as working during the survey's reporting week. They do not necessarily count positions that are filled by MSFWs at other times of the month or workers that the employer brings on and doesn't report on tax roll and/or for Workman's Compensation and Unemployment Insurance.

This report provides a best estimate of the number of MSFWs in Montana in 2011 since data unavailability and limitations preclude making a precise estimate. This best estimate references the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Labor Day Report, 2007 Census of Agriculture and Rural Employment Opportunities. Given the lack of alternative or more up-to-date data and information, this report assumes that the observed relationship between the number of jobs and numbers of farm workers in 2007 has been constant, or little changed, over the last 5 years. Actual trends in the official agricultural employment data offer support for this assumption, including data from the economic rebound.

Although displaying year-to-year variables, overall agricultural employment levels in Montana do not appear to have changed much over the last 5 years. The best estimate of MSFWs in Montana is 22,370. Barring any significant changes in crops and livestock production in Montana, the estimated numbers of MSFWs in Montana are expected to remain near these same levels over the next two years.

2. Outreach Activities

Montana has a working partnership with the Montana NFJP grantee and actively collaborates in outreach efforts with this organization. Rural Employment Opportunities (REO) is the WIA Section 167 grantee in Montana and has field staff deployed around the state. All but one are co-located in Job Service offices. The one office that is not co-located still works closely with the Job Service in that community. The local agreements between these agencies require coordinated services, including outreach activities. The REO staff conducts regular outreach activities according to their contract with the U.S. Department of Labor. The outreach conducted by REO staff results in individuals being referred to the Job Service for further services. The REO staff also conducts outreach to employers on a regular basis. Through this partnership, Montana has been able to reach and serve the agricultural community who are otherwise who are not being reached by Job Service staff. The Job Service expects to assign at least 696 hours of staff time to outreach in the next year. The MSFW outreach worker is trained in local office procedures, informal resolution of complaints and in the services, benefits and protections afforded to MSFWs. Materials that are used in outreach activities include brochures for local health clinics, information on the complaint system, directions and brochures for the local SNAP (food stamp) and TANF (cash assistance) public assistance office, upcoming opportunities for occupational trainings,

contact information for the local migrant counsel, resources for childcare, contacts for legal services, books for documenting their hours worked, information for contacting both State and Federal Wage and Hour Division and referrals for housing if housing is needed.

There are 21 Outreach workers located in Job Services throughout the state who conduct a variety of MSFW outreach activities year-round. Outreach workers spend time in the service area contacting, explaining and encouraging MSFWs to use the services and resources available in the Job Services. The outreach workers find MSFWs throughout the state, especially in rural areas where they live, work, and gather, such as markets, parks and other locations. The many responsibilities of the outreach workers include the following duties:

- Educating MSFWs on rights with respect to terms and condition of employment
- Developing and maintaining links between MSFWs, Job Services, public and private community agencies, MSFW groups and employers
- Coordinating outreach efforts with MSFW community service providers
- Assisting MSFWs with job search and placement, initiating job development contacts, and referrals to supportive services
- Assisting with the completion of the MontanaWorks system registration, resume, job applications and other documents as needed
- Providing assistance with obtaining unemployment insurance benefits, information on the UI4U web site, and referrals to specific employment opportunities if MSFWs are unemployed
- Making referrals to supportive services which MSFWs and their family members may be eligible to receive
- Providing information regarding current and future employment opportunities which may be available in the future; this includes posting job orders and informing MSFWs about available H-2A Job Orders
- Informing MSFWs of the full range of available services, including job training opportunities available through the job service and the local community based organizations
- Informing MSFWs about the job service complaint system and providing assistance with filing and processing complaints.

In addition, information from WIA Section 167 partners located in Job Service locations throughout the state is included to help MSFWs receive a comprehensive blend of core, intensive, and training services designed to place them into full time, non-seasonal employment or upgraded agricultural employment. The outreach workers are also heavily engaged in the recruitment efforts of domestic workers to H-2A vacancies. These activities include:

- Performing various recruitment activities, including outreach, to find and refer qualified domestic workers in order to fill H-2A job openings.
- Encouraging agricultural employers to use MontanaWorks for publishing job openings to fill their job openings locally and/or through the H-2A program if necessary.

The data gathered by the outreach workers on the number of MSFWs contacted through outreach activities and by other agencies in the area are recorded and submitted to the Monitor Advocate in Central Office. The Monitor Advocate works directly with the Job Services to ensure that these sites are in compliance with federal mandates and Montana Workforce Services Division policies and procedures. Montana continues to partner with Rural Employment Opportunities and the local Migrant Councils to assist in overcoming barriers in providing services to the MSFWs, especially during the economic downturn which has resulted in high unemployment rates in many MSFW areas.

The minimum number of MSFW contacts by outreach staff per day, according Department of Labor guidelines, is a minimum of five contacts per eight hours worked. In the past, Montana has not made this contact minimum a priority. That being said, the outreach employees that are assigned to local offices are not full time outreach staff. Each of these staff members has several duties that must be met each day. Our goal for PY 2013-2014 is to meet that minimum. Table 4 illustrates the goals for each local office where outreach workers are assigned.

Table 4

Goals by Local Office

Job Service Site	Contact Goal*	Hours
Region 1		
Libby	5	1.5
Kalispell	5	1.5
Polson	7	3
Thompson Falls	5	1.5
Missoula	5	1.5
Hamilton	5	1.5
Region 2		
Dillon	10	4
Butte	7	3
Anaconda	7	3
Helena	5	1.5
Bozeman	5	1.5
Livingston	5	1.5
Region 3		
Great Falls	7	3
Shelby	5	1.5
Cut Bank	5	1.5
Havre	7	3
Region 4		
Billings	10	4
Lewistown	5	1.5
Region 5		
Glasgow	10	4
Wolf Point	7	3
Sidney	10	4
Glendive	7	3
Miles City	7	3
Totals per monthly	151	58
Totals annually	1812	696

*Goal is based on an average month, not an eight hour day because outreach employees are not dedicated to outreach full time

3. Services Provided to MSFWs through the Job Service Centers

Montana is required to make the services of the Job Service centers available to all job seekers, including MSFW, in an equitable manner. Each Job Service site must offer the full range of employment services, benefits and protections, including the full range of counseling, testing and job training referral services to MSFWs, the same services provided to non-MSFWs. Therefore, the services available from

the Job Service sites, including all other DOL funded WIA services, must be available to MSFWs in a manner appropriate to their needs as job seekers.

The DOL Employment and Training Administration (ETA) requires that states ensure equity of services for MSFWs and non-MSFWs. Montana's Indicator of Compliance reports record all service outcomes tracked for regular job seekers, including MSFWs, such as receiving staff assisted services, referrals to supportive services, referrals to jobs, career guidance, and job development contacts to ensure MSFWs continue to receive qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportional services.

Montana has consistently met three of the five equity indicators during PY 2012-2013. To ensure that all equity indicators will be met in PY 2013-2014, the Monitor Advocate has begun conducting annual programmatic reviews of all job service sites. After reviewing program performance data, the Monitor Advocate will contact the office manager to discuss findings and offer initial recommendations and appropriate technical assistance. If the Monitor Advocate identifies a finding, a Corrective Action Plan is requested and the Monitor Advocate follows up with each job service site to ensure that the Corrective Action Plan is being implemented appropriately and is brought into full compliance.

4. Services Provided to Agricultural Employers through the Job Service System

The Montana Workforce Services Division recognizes the importance of the agricultural industry in Montana and has devoted resources to meet the labor needs of agricultural employers and MSFWs. Funding for agricultural series comes from Wagner Peyser and Foreign Labor Certification funds granted to the states annually. Wagner Peyser funds are given to Montana based on a formula basis. The Foreign Labor funds are provided by DOL/ETA to Montana to process foreign labor application requests, conduct housing inspections, conduct agricultural wage and prevailing practice surveys, and collect agricultural crop and labor information.

The Job Service sites provide special services to employers on an individual and as needed basis. These services are in addition to the MontanaWorks system, which is the computer program that each Job Service is equipped with. MontanaWorks is used for registering job seekers with the Job Service, posting job openings online, and in the Job Service Center, tracking services provided to job seekers well as employers and tracking referrals made to job openings. Outreach workers also provide the following service to agricultural employers:

- Perform recruitment activities to find and refer qualified MSFWs in order to fill the labor needs of agricultural employers
- Encourage agricultural employers to publish their job openings using MontanaWorks to fill job openings
- Provide labor market information with such data as supply and demand, salaries, training requirements, new and emerging occupations and industry growth
- Provide Rapid Response services due to plant closure or mass layoffs.

5. Review and Comment by Key Stakeholders

Work load requirements allow for the position of the State Monitor Advocate to also serve as the State Workforce Advocate. This person oversees the operations of the Job Service sites to ensure that MSFWs receive equal employment services in both quality and quantity as compared to employment services provided to non-MSFWs. The Monitor Advocate employee works as both a monitor and an advocate for the MSFWs.

In the role as advocate, the Monitor Advocate promotes the needs and concerns of MSFWs to Workforce Services Division leadership. Additionally, the Monitor Advocate reviews and comments on directives and policy changes that affect the MSFWs. The Workforce Services Division has duly afforded the Monitor Advocate with the opportunity to comment on the Agricultural Outreach Plan as required by Title 20 CFR part 653.111 (h). This Agricultural Outreach Plan has been shared with the NFJP grantee, Rural Employment Opportunities (REO).